



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

REPORT TO THE HEARING OFFICER

HEARING DATE: March 30, 2005 REPORT NO. HO-05-065

ATTENTION: HEARING OFFICER

SUBJECT: Nextel Gonzales Canyon, PTS Project No. 4475

LOCATION: 5050 Del Mar Heights Road

APPLICANT: Nextel Communications

SUMMARY

Requested Action - Should the Hearing Officer approve Carmel Valley Site Development Permit No. 201718 to install of a minor telecommunication facility consisting of a total of six panel antennas mounted on two replacement 30-foot tall light standards, a 200 square foot equipment building, two GPS antennas, landscaping, and enhanced architectural treatments at an existing church site within the SF1-A zone of the Carmel Valley Planned District Ordinance and the Carmel Valley Neighborhood 4A Precise Plan?

Staff Recommendation -

1. CERTIFY MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (MND) No. 4475; and
2. APPROVE CARMEL VALLEY SITE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT NO. 201718.

Community Planning Group Recommendation – At their January 12, 2005 meeting, the Carmel Valley Community Planning Group voted 11-0-1 recommending approval of the project with one condition as discussed in the report.

Environmental Review - A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION, LDR No. 4475, has been prepared for the project in accordance with State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. A Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program (MMRP) has been prepared and will be implemented which will reduce, to a level of insignificance, any potential impacts identified in the environmental review process.

BACKGROUND

Nextel Communications is proposing to install an unmanned wireless communication facility on a previously disturbed lot zoned SF1-A designated residential/institutional by the Carmel Valley Neighborhood Unit 4A Precise Plan. Currently, the Congregational Beth-Am synagogue operates with an approved Carmel Valley Planned Development Permit, Resource Protection Ordinance, and Conditional Use Permit (CVPDP, RPO, CUP) No. 94-0541 issued on November 19, 1996.

The City of San Diego Development Services Department already issued Nextel Communications a 10-year minor telecommunications use permit No. 94-0330-88 for the operation of this unmanned wireless communication facility on August 24, 2000. It has been determined that a Carmel Valley Site Development Permit (CVSDP) is also required prior to facility installation. For consistency with the approved use permit the current proposal includes an August 24, 2010 expiration date.

The proposed facility consists of a total of six panel antennas with three antennas atop each of two replacement 30-foot tall light standard. Each light standard will include a 24-inch diameter Raydome fiberglass shield to screen the panel antennas. The facility also consists of two Global Positioning System (GPS) antennas that will be mounted on an above-ground 200 square foot equipment building.

The installation is on the northeast corner of a previously graded lot, with the equipment building screened by an enhanced block wall system that measures 13-feet from grade at its highest point. Only 11-feet is exposed when the installation and backfill of the wall is complete. At maturation, twelve 15-gallon Italian Cypress, four 15-gallon Carrot Wood, and fourteen 15-gallon Natal Plum will soften the full height of the walls and reduce visual impacts for those that either reside or travel along White Emerald Drive. The equipment building sits at a lower elevation and will not be seen by those traveling along Del Mar Heights Road.

The site is located along Del Mar Height Road east of Interstate 5 and north of SR-56, approximately one-half mile to the west of the Pacific Highlands Ranch Subarea boundary. The project site is bounded by Canyon Hills Community Church to the west, the 10-unit Sundowner Estates to the north, Del Mar Height Road to the south and east, with single family residential units further to the south and east of the project site. This project proposes to add service coverage and capacity in a developing area and along a transportation corridor where Nextel currently experiences service deficiencies.

The project is consistent with the underlying Carmel Valley Planned District SF1-A zone regulations, 'Communication Antenna' regulations per Land Development Code section 141.0405, Council Policy 600-43 adopted May 1999 for 'Wireless Communication Facilities', CVPDP/RPO/CUP No 94-0541, and the Carmel Valley Neighborhood 4A Precise Plan.

DISCUSSION

Project Objective: Nextel Communication's objective in site selection is to fill a gap in wireless

coverage area for existing and developing neighborhoods within the target area. Without this site service gaps will continue. Nextel has sites that provide effective coverage in areas to the north, east, and west of this site. Minor coverage area and capacity issues will remain for areas that will fall outside the service influence area of this facility. The goal of this site is to provide seamless and uninterrupted service for those that live, travel and/or work in the area. See Attachment 5 for pre- and post-installation coverage objectives. The existing coverage gap is located within a predominantly residential area with minimal opportunities for alternate site considerations.

Project Description: The project has been designed to achieve balanced and effective integration with the surrounding neighborhood. The project proposes to replace two existing thirty foot tall light standards near the easternmost driveway. Each light standard proposes three panel antennas, each antenna measuring one foot by four feet and concealed behind one Raydome shield atop each light standard. The addition of two GPS antennas onto the modular building will pose no additional visual impact.

The 10 foot by 20 foot modular equipment building shall be situated in near proximity of the light standards, on a sloping and previously disturbed portion of the lot. The location for the equipment is sited on the downward slope away from and at a lower elevation than Del Mar Heights Road and cannot be seen by those traveling along Del Mar Heights Road.

Community Planning Group: The Carmel Valley Community Planning Group recently considered the project at their January 12, 2004 meeting and recommended 11-0-1 to approve the project with a sole condition that the antenna be at a minimum 200 feet to the closest residence. As designed, the project is sited 135 feet to the closest residence. The City of San Diego currently does not have regulations that establish a minimum separation between wireless communication antennas and any adjacent uses. In addition, the current Federal Communication Commission (FCC) regulations established by the Telecommunication Act of 1996 preclude staff from considering Radio Frequency (RF) emissions as a deciding factor for communication antenna siting.

ALTERNATIVE

1. Approve Carmel Valley Planned Development Permit No. 201718.
2. Approve Carmel Valley Planned Development Permit No. 201718 with modifications.
3. Deny Carmel Valley Planned Development Permit No. 201718 if the findings required to approve the project cannot be supported.

Respectfully submitted,

Roman Anissi, Development Project Manager

Attachments:

1. Aerial Photograph
2. Community Plan Land Use Map
3. Project Location Map
4. Project Data Sheet
5. Coverage Maps
6. Existing Facilities Map
7. Project Site Plan, Elevations, Landscape Details
8. Draft Permit with Conditions
9. Draft Resolution with Findings
10. Community Planning Group Recommendation
11. Ownership Disclosure Statement
12. Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 4475